[This transcript was created by LAI staff. It is as true a representation of the original as we could create. When a word was too difficult to decipher or was questionable we put those words in brackets. All text in brackets represents the voice of the transcriber rather than the voice of the letter writer. We have not maintained the spacing that exists in the original letters because that was not compliant with our accessibility standards. We are left justifying most lines.]

[citation information]
Collection title: Corcoran Gallery of Art and Corcoran College of Art + Design, Corcoran Gallery of Art directors' records
Collection number: COR-0002-0-RG
Series 1: MacLeod, Barbarin and McGuire records
Subseries 1: Indexed correspondence
Box 2008-001
Folder 29: Letters 281-290

[Front of Letter 281]
Niches, Statues for, Paris, Feb 24, 1874
Copy of letter
With regard to Statues for Niches on outside of Building

[Letter 281]

The Debay terra-cotta figures are common things + cannot be called Art + there are not 13 of them that would suit. Nos. 435, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444 + 445 page 5 + Nos. 453 + 455 page 6 are about all that might do. They said they had (which I did not see + are not on the catalogue) 2 of Canovas dancing girls about the same size. If you are resolved on economy you might suggest their taking on trial some few of these figures (say 4) + if they dont suit they could be put in the garden of the Louise home, after a trial or use in waiting for better things. I once sent Avery 2 of these figures you might ask him about them and where they are to be seen in N.Y. Since your letter I have been looking about and can say what I have seen at the Louvre + a better guide I think cannot be had.

In the interior Court all the niches are not yet filled and it is some time since Francis first. These Statues are of white marble - 2 of them were on the ground + they are not quite my height (I am about 6 ft.) + they are placed in the 1st, 2nd, + 3rd Stories - so I don't think it would be necessary to have for the Corcoran statues larger than life, as you thought. Some of the statues, under Napn III [Napoleon III], were paid as much as 8000fs - On the outside, in the beautiful facade on the Seine, where are the friezes of Jean Gorgon, there are 13 niches + these are filled with stone statues, as I proposed, and produce a very fine effect. The tops of the heads of none of these statues either outside or in are placed higher than the springing point of the arch of the niche. [drawing inserted of statue posed in niche with 'springing point' of the arch marked] In the largest niche of which you sent drawing there is 8ft. 6in. from bottom of

niche to springing point - take off 2ft. 6 in. for the pedestal + you will have just 6ft., the height necessary for the statue. I am convinced from observation that the best effect is produced when the top of the head of the Statue ends at the springing point of the Arch. From your drawing the pedestals are marked 3ft. 2in. - are they in place, if so, cannot they be replaced by others of necessary height. In reference to these Stone Statues I have seen an artist sculptor who says he will execute them at 2000 or 2500fs but thinks they can be done for 2000fs. If you are willing to spend this sum a trial might be made with 4 to commence and I have thought if it can be done to have the Artist inspire himself with the 4 figures of Jean Gorgon of which you have the bronze bas reliefs, + portray by suitable objects instead of the vases they hold the objects of the figures, Art, Painting etc etc. This is a thing to examine + if it can be well carried out would I am sure do well.

[Letter 77 is located here in folder 29 and has been transcribed here although according to the finding aid this letter should be in folder 08]

[Letter 77]

[Letterhead of the U.S. Patent Office, Washington, D.C., Dec 26, 1872]

Gov. H.D. Cooke

Dr Sir,

As one of the trustees of the “Corcoran Art Gallery” I have been intending for sometime past to call your attention, and that of the other trustees, to the largest + best collection of Stereoscope pictures perhaps in the world, which the owner has been many years in collecting - possessing facilities which perhaps no other person has had, or at present has, this owing to his wonderful collection being known to our largest dealers + importers, who send him, unordered, thousands at a time to select from. Many of his pictures can never be replaced. They embrace everything interesting as well as artistic pertaining to almost every country on the face of the Globe. It embraces “landscape scenery”, architecture, manners and customs - statuary, groups, transparencies, natural history, botany etc etc. I wish his catalogue were printed so that one could get an appropriate idea of this wonderful collection, the counterpart of which is not in existence.

This collection now numbers nearly, if not 90,000, all choice, selected urn’s. Should not the Corcoran Art Gallery secure it? [W.?] Smith the owner, a clerk in the City Post Office in gathering this Museum, did it, without any idea of parting with it; but many of his friends have been urging him to forego the pleasure of holding it, and sell it to some such institution as the one before referred to.

Many of his beautiful illuminated urns, such as the Operas in Paris, must have cost him over or at least a dollar a piece. I think the collection can be bought for $35,000 may be less. For a year or two longer perhaps a couple of thousand dollars can be judiciously expended to fully complete it. I suppose [W?] Smith, who lives at the SW Cor of 8th and NY Ave NW would take pleasure in showing you or any of the gentlemen associated with you, the extent and superior character of his collection, which I can give you no idea of in this hurried communication.

Truly Yours,
S.S. [Fahnestock?]

[Back of Letter 77]
S.S. [Fahnestock?]
Resp'y referred to A. Hyde Esq., Secy etc. H.D.C.
Calls attention to 90,000 Stereoscopic pictures for $35,000

[Front of Letter 282]
Lucas, G.A., Paris, Mar 4, 1874
With regard to Rebonet's picture of "Nights"

[No letter enclosed for Letter 282]

[Front of Letter 283]
Avery, S.P., N.Y. Apl 6/74
Apl 7/74
Has returned Stewarts head by Express. Encloses bill for frame. Whole expense $42

[Letter 283]

[Letterhead of S.P. Avery Art Rooms, 88 Fifth Ave. near 14 St.]
New York, Apl 6th 1874

Mr. MacLeod-

Dear Sir,

I have sent today the Stewart head in frame - after the spots we filled in the back ground, the picture was merely washed and the thinnest coat of varnish put on, I think that the face has at some time been cleaned - some of the tarnish rubbed off - but as it stands it is one of the finest Stewart's I know of and [while?] it was in my rooms awaiting the frame the principal artists came to see it Huntington - Baker - Stine - Hicks and all united in saying it was "great". I had a simple

and old style frame put on thinking it is better keeping than the present fashion of heavy frames with a profusion of ornaments. This style also will remain in good order for a long time.

I enclose the bill for frame and the other charges are 5$ for retouching. [Mixing?] 2 42$ in all. With thanks for the pleasure of [illegible] so fine a picture I remain yours most truly [illegible]

Sam P. Avery

[Enclosed is bill for frame from Thomas A. Wilmurt, Manufacturer of Looking-Glasses & Picture-Frames]

[Front of Letter 284]
Thayer, Samford, Syracuse, April 4/74
April 7/74
Will send his picture of Mr. Elliot to the Gallery [by?] Express on Monday. (Apl 6)

[Letter 284]

Syracuse, April, 4. 1874.

Dear Mr. MacLeod; Your favor of 31. [ult?], notifying me of the action of the Corcoran Art Comm. in reference to my sending on my portrait of Mr. Elliott reached me this morning, and I hasten to accede to their requirements, and on monday next I shall endeavor to express to you the picture, chg's [illegible] paid. Then like a poor [lad?] anxiously wait with fear to trembling the final verdict, which I hope will come short of "six months".

Were I sure of a sale I would have the frame regilt before shipping it off; still it does not really need it, and I shall submit it as it is and hope for the best.

With many thanks for your kindness etc. I am respectfully,

Sanford Thayer

[Front of Letter 285]
Candida, Sister Mary, New Orleans, Mar 27/74
April 3./74
Speaks of a gentleman (Mr. C.J. O'Hara) who has a collection of pictures to dispose of & mentions, "Crucifixion" said to be by Valasquez Dondiego, "Last Supper" said to be by Raphael, and "Adoration of the Magi" by Van Dyke.
Declined Ans April 3?

[Letter 285]

Sister Mary Candida, St. Vincent's School, Mch 27, 1874
New Orleans, La. March 27th, 1874

W.W. Corcoran Esq.:

Dear Sir,

One of your great and noble deeds has suggested the writing of this letter.

A week or so since, my attention was called to the fact that a gentleman in Washington very wealthy, but still more generous, had given of his own private purse, a very large sum of money, to pay the Teachers of the Public Schools of that city.

I did not at first-attend to the name, being so much occupied with the deed, but the name "Corcoran reminded me of my girlhood, when being employed by the ladies keeping fair-tables, we used to see who would get the first donation from Mr. Corcoran; each on sure of receiving something for he never refused.

Little did I think when hearing the above, that he was the same noble-hearted and high-minded individual - supposing that he had already gone to receive the reward of his deeds of benevolence.

Thank God! he still lives to be a benefactor to suffering humanity. May his years be blessed, and may they be as numerous as his heart desires!

Now to the object of my letter - having heard of a "Gallery of Arts", bearing your name, and supposing it to be yours, I venture to state to you that a gentleman in this city, who has been collecting paintings for some years, is now about to start for Europe to dispose of them. I have prevailed upon him to wait intending to mention the subject to you.

If you desire any of the master-pieces (as they are said to be) for yourself or for our country I think that you should have the preference.

Besides, in case you should purchase the paintings of this gentleman, he will not be obliged to absent himself from his family.

It will also be a consolation to me to assist this good man who has been in his own day, such a friend to use - for, you know, "The poor we have always with us."

The gentleman (Mr. C.J. O'Hara) will, (if sufficient encouragement be given) take the paintings to Washington or, if you prefer it, send some suitable person to see them.

I cannot give my opinion upon the paintings, as I am no judge, but much controversy has existed about a “Crucifixion”, said to be the original of Valasquez Dondiego; a “Last Supper” said to have been painted by Raphael, and “The Adoration of the Magi” by Van Dyke.

Hoping, dear Sir, that you will pardon the liberty I have taken.

I am, most respectfully,
Sister Mary Candida

W.W. Corcoran, Esq, Washington, D.C.

[Front of Letter 286]
Thayer, Sanford, Syracuse N.Y., Apl. 4, 1874
Ansd Apl 9/74
Offers portrait of himself by C.S. Elliott, for sale.

[Letter 286]

Syracuse, April, 4, 1874

Mr. W.W. Corcoran;

Dear Sir -

Pardon me if I intrude myself upon you beyond the bounds of propriety and attribute my strange action to my peculiar mental, physical and financial condition, and after you have heard me should you deem it not worth your attention, please consign my letter to the flames and forget that such a bore as myself exists.

Since addressing you before I have learned something more of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and have had some serious thoughts, pro and con, of a matter which I have finally resolved to lay before you, viz. I have in my possession a chef d'oeuvre of the late Mr. Elliott, and one which he always considered to be in many respects his best effort, and which has been pronounced by artists and connoisseurs unequaled in this country, and when on exhibition at the “Royal Academy” England, was said to be the best specimen of portraiture seen on its walk since the days of Sir Anthony Van Dyke. And, Mr. Corcoran, if I am to die tomorrow I had rather have the picture in some art collection than in the hands of any relative I have on earth.

Aside from any personal pride of mine, the picture is a portrait of myself, it seems to me but appropriate that our nation and gifted artist Elliott should be represented by a few of his best-works in the Corcoran Gallery of Art, for that must become in all future time the leading art

collection of this nation. And Sir, since my present pecuniary embarrassment has set me to thinking, and the appropriateness of their suggestions seems so plausible I take the liberty of entrusting you with it, and beg you will give it your thoughts and should it meet your approval drop me a line of advise or word of council; I throw myself entirely upon your good judgement and mercy.

On monday next I shall ship my portrait of my lamented friend and tutor, to the inspection of the Art Comm. And if I was sufficiently hopeful and thought those two pictures would be purchased for the institution that perpetuates your honorable name I should be happy to send them both off together. But I must close, pardon my importunacy, which I remain respectfully yours.

Sanford Thayer

[Front of Letter 287]
Kennedy, P.M. College Hill Conn., Apl 8/74
Apl 10/74
Will send to the Gallery pictures mentioned in former letters

[Letter 287]

[Letterhead used from the Office of William H. Fisher; Attorney at Law and Counsellor in Patent Cases, No. 44 West Fifth Street, (Fountain Square,) (Note: Letterhead header has been struck through)]
College Hill, Cincinnati, O. 8th April 1874

William MacLeod Esq. Washington

Dear Sir,

I was waiting to hear from my friend General Scammow, who takes a friendly interest in the disposal of the pictures, I had the pleasure of offering to your inspection. His aim, was to substantiate, what, I have already written to you regarding their genuineness and quality, through some friends in your city, allowing the paintings themselves to rest on their merits alone. With this view I will send to your own address, packed in a case so carefully, that there can be little chance of injury externally. (if you will kindly allow me to do so) “The Magdalene by P. P. Rubens after the transfiguration of Christ”, and the Breklenkamp “The Interior of a Barons Hall with Cavaliers + Ladies arriving to Dinner”. This picture is nearly 3 feet by 2 - and has been estimated for its truth to the costume of the time, and exquisite finish. It is about 230 years old - on the right hand corner the ground has been slightly rubbed, but no injury to any of the figures. the price for the two $5000.

I can give you thorough evidence as to the genuineness of these works, and satisfy you as the truth of what I have formerly mentioned. I have no doubt if once you have an opportunity of examining them, the internal evidence will be sufficient. My friend Mr. N.S. Jones will take all charge of sending them, without any trouble to yourself but the necessary examination.

I am Dear Sir Yours respectfully
P.M. Kennedy

[Front of Letter 288]
Luquer S.L., Brooklyn 618 Henry St., Apl 15?/74
Ansd Apl 9/74
Asks if Gallery would part with Stewarts picture

[Letter 288]

618 Henry St., Brooklyn, April 15th

Mr. MacLeod

Dear Sir-

I understand that my sister Ms. Pringle has just sold the picture of the Chief Justice Shippen to the Art Association - or Corcoran Art Gallery - one of my children would be much obliged to you to say whether you are willing to part with the picture + on what terms - if not already [hung?] perhaps the appreciation is not too late. + I entrust an answer as soon as convenient remaining

Very Respectfully Yrs
S.L. Luquer

[Front of Letter 289]
Stevens, Chs P., Balt April 11, 1874
April 13/74
Has sent Walnut seats by Rail Road

[Letter 289]

[Letterhead of Charles P. Stevens, Manufacturer]
Baltimore April 11, 1874

Mr. Wm McLeod, Curator, Corcoran Gallery of Art

Dear Sir

The Walnut Seats were sent for RR today and for same please find Bill enclosed. I have had them ready several days except the [perforated?] seats which the [illegible] that make them kept me waiting.

I trust they will reach you safely + give satisfaction.

About Thursday or Friday next I will call on you + will be glad to have further [orders?].

Yos Truly
Char P. Stevens

[Front of Letter 290]
Auze M., N.Y., Apl 2/74
Ansd Apl 13/74
The Busts were sent by a special Agent, and should now be in Washington

[Letter 290]

April 20, 1874

Mr. MacLeod,

I have received a letter this moment from Columbia saything the Busts were to be sent by a special agent as there were reasons why they should not be sent by express & that they ought to be in Washington before this time. I hope they are safely in your hands.

Regretting the delay & annoyance of uncertainty and begging to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Corcorans letter of the 31st March & yours also. I am respectfully [illegible]

M. Auze
19 E. 31st